

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric for repair of in particular inguinal or hiatus hernias, the hernia mesh fabric comprising;

[[-]] a base sheet of layered, flexible mesh material;

[[-]] a passage in the base sheet for a body canal, in particular for a spermatic cord or a oesophagus; [[and]]

[[-]] an insertion slit between a contour of the base sheet and the passage for insertion of the body canal into the passage [[(3)]]; and

[[-]] a sewing bridge which is located in the vicinity of a mouth of the insertion slit and which is able to be folded down on the insertion slit and, on both sides thereof, to be stitched to the mesh material of the base sheet, wherein said sewing bridge is a bridge tongue which is cut to size in one piece with said mesh material of said base sheet, said bridge tongue being integrally connected to said mesh material.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein the bridge tongue has a rectangular basic shape of such dimensioning that, when [[it]] said bridge tongue is doubled up, the insertion slit is covered at least as far as slightly upstream of the passage.

4. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein the bridge tongue covers the insertion slit on both sides substantially symmetrically.

5. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein the bridge tongue, where directly adjoining the mouth of the insertion slit into the contour of the base sheet, is integrally attached to the base sheet, said bridge tongue having [[have]] rounded corners.

6. (Previously Presented) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the base sheet and the bridge tongue have rounded corners.

7. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 1, wherein [[it]] said bridge tongue and said base layer sheet are [[is]] cut to size from meshed sheet material preferably of polypropylene by the aid of a laser cutting beam.

8. (Previously Presented) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 1, comprising a metal-containing, continuous, biocompatible coating.

9. (Previously Presented) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 8, wherein the coating is a titanium-containing coating of a thickness of less than 2 μm , preferably of 5 to 700 nm.

10. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 1, wherein the bridge tongue, in a condition of pre-fabrication, is doubled up and stitched to the mesh material of the base sheet on one side of the insertion slit forming a unilateral stitching arrangement.

11. (Previously Presented) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 10, wherein the unilateral stitching arrangement is a double-stitched seam, comprising an outer seam and a seam which is displaced inwards at a distance therefrom.

12. (New) A hernia mesh fabric for repair of inguinal or hiatus hernias, the hernia mesh fabric comprising:

a base sheet comprising layered, flexible mesh material;

a recess defined in said base sheet for receiving at least a portion of a body part;

an insertion slit defined between a contour of said base sheet and said recess for insertion of said at least said portion of said body part into said space; and

a sewing bridge located in an area of a mouth of the insertion slit, said sewing bridge being integrally connected to said base sheet to form a one piece base sheet sewing bridge structure, said sewing bridge being movable such that said sewing bridge moves from an unfolded position to a folded position, said sewing bridge being folded down on said insertion slit in said folded position, said sewing bridge covering each side of said insertion slit in said folded position, said sewing bridge being stitched to said mesh material of said base sheet in

said folded position.

13. (New) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 12, wherein said sewing bridge tongue has a rectangular basic shape of such dimensioning that, when said bridge tongue is doubled up, the insertion slit is covered at least as far as slightly upstream of the passage.

14. (New) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 12, wherein said sewing bridge covers the insertion slit on both sides substantially symmetrically.

15. (New) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 12, wherein said sewing bridge, where directly adjoining the mouth of the insertion slit into the contour of the base sheet, is integrally attached to the base sheet, said sewing bridge having rounded corners.

16. (New) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 12, wherein at least one of said base sheet and said sewing bridge have rounded corners.

17. (New) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 12, wherein said sewing bridge and said base sheet are cut to size from meshed sheet material via a laser cutting beam, said meshed sheet material comprising polypropylene.

18. (New) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 12, further comprising a metal-

containing, continuous, biocompatible coating, said coating being applied to said sewing bridge and said base sheet.

19. (New) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 18, wherein the coating is a titanium-containing coating of a thickness of less than 2 μm , preferably of 5 to 700 nm.

20. (New) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 21, wherein said sewing bridge is doubled up in said folded position, said sewing bridge being stitched to said mesh material of said base sheet on one side of said insertion slit to form a unilateral stitching arrangement, said unilateral stitching arrangement being a double-stitched seam, said double-stitched seam comprising an outer seam and a seam which is displaced inwards at a spaced location from said outer seam.

21. (New) A hernia mesh fabric for repair of inguinal or hiatus hernias, the hernia mesh fabric comprising:

a base sheet comprising layered, flexible mesh material;

a recess defined in said base sheet for receiving at least a portion of a body part;

an insertion slit extending between a contour of said base sheet and said recess for insertion of said at least said portion of said body part into said space, said base sheet comprising an appendage integrally connected thereto, said appendage being located adjacent to said insertion slit in an area of said contour, said appendage having an appendage surface,

said appendage being movable such that said appendage moves from an unfolded position to a folded position, said appendage being folded on said insertion slit in said folded position such that at least a portion of said appendage surface is opposite said insertion slit, said appendage covering each side of said insertion slit in said folded position, said appendage being connected to said mesh material of said base sheet in said folded position via a stitch connection.